

T H E
D E V I L T O P A Y;

OR, THE
W I V E S M E T A M O R P H O S ' D.

By C H A R L E S C O F F E Y.

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

M E N.

Sir JOHN LOVERULE.
BUTLER.
COOK.
FOOTMAN.

COACHMAN.
JOBSON.
DOCTOR.

W O M E N.

Lady LOVERULE.
LUCY.

LETTICE.
NELL, Jobson's Wife.

TENANTS, SERVANTS.

SCENE, A COUNTRY VILLAGE.

SCENE I. *The Cobler's House,*

Jobson and Nell.

Nell. PR'YTHEE, good Jobson, stay with me to-night, and for once make merry at home.

Job. Peace, peace, you jade, and go to spin; for if I lack any thread for my stitching, I will punish you by virtue of my soveraign authority.

Nell. Ay, marry, no doubt of that; whilst you take your swing at the alehouse, spend your substance, get drunk as a beast, then come home like a sot, and use one like a dog.

Job. Nounz! do you prate? Why, how now, brazen-face, do you speak ill of the government? Don't you know, hussy, that I am king in my own house, and that this is treason against my majesty?

Nell. Did ever one hear such stuff! But I pray you now, Jobson, don't go to the alehouse to-night.

Job. Well, I'll humour you for once: but don't grow saucy upon't; for I am invited by Sir John Loverule's butler, and am to be princely drunk with punch at the hall-place; we shall have a bowl large enough to swim in.

Nell. But they say, husband, the new lady will not suffer a stranger to enter her doors; she grudges even a draught of small-beer to her own servants; and several of the tenants have come home with broken heads from her ladyship's own hands, only for sinelling strong beer in the house.

Job. A pox on her for a fanatical jade! She has almost distracted the good knight: but she's now abroad feasting with her relations, and will scarce come home to-night; and we are to have much drink, a fiddle, and merry gambols.

Nell. O dear husband! let me go with you, we'll be as merry as the night's long.

Job. Why how now, you bold baggage! would you be carried to a company of smooth-fac'd, eating, drinking, lazy serving-men! No, no, you jade, I'll not be a cuckold.

Nell. I'm sure they would make me welcome; you promis'd I should see the house, and the family has not been here before, since you marry'd and brought me home.

Job. Why, thou most audacious strumpet, dar'st thou dispute with me, thy lord and master? Get in

and spin, or else my strap shall wind about thy ribs most confoundedly.

A I R I. The Twitcher.

*He that has the best wife,
She's the plague of his life;
But for her that will scold and will quarrel,
Let him cut her off short
Of her meat and her sport,
And ten times a day hoop her barrel, brave boys,
And ten times a day hoop her barrel.*

Nell. Well, we poor women must always be slaves, and never have any joy; but you men run and ramble at your pleasure.

Job. Why, you most pestilent baggage, will you be hoop'd? Be gone.

Nell. I must obey. [Going.]

Job. Stay! now I think on't, here's sixpence for you, get ale and apples, stretch and puff thyself up with lambs-wool, rejoice and revel by thyself, be drunk and wallow in thy own stye, like a grumbling sow as thou art.

*He that has the best wife,
She's the plague of his life, &c.* [Exeunt.]

SCENE II. Sir John's.

Butler, Cook, Footman, Coachman, Lucy, Lettice, &c.

But. I would the blind fiddler and our dancing neighbours were here, that we might rejoice a little, while our termagant lady is abroad; I have made a most sovereign bowl of punch.

Lucy. We had need rejoice sometimes, for our devilish new lady will never suffer it in her hearing.

But. I will maintain, there is more mirth in a galley, than in our family: Our master indeed is the worthiest gentleman—nothing but sweetness and liberality.

Foot. But here's a house turn'd topsy-turvy, from heaven to hell, since she came hither.

Lucy. His former lady was all virtue and mildness.

But. Ay, rest her soul, she was so; but this is inspir'd with a legion of devils, who make her lay about her like a fury.

Lucy. I am sure I always feel her in my bones: if her complexion don't please her, or she looks yellow in a morning, I am sure to look black and blue for it before night.

Cook. Pox on her! I dare not come within her reach. I have some six broken heads already. A lady, quotha! a she-bear is a civilier animal.

Foot. Heaven help my poor master! this devilish termagant scolding woman will be the death of him; I never saw a man so altered all the days of my life.

Cook. There's a perpetual motion in that tongue of hers, and a damn'd shrill pipe, enough to break the drum of a man's ear.

Enter blind Fiddler, Jobson, and Neighbours.

But. Welcome, welcome all; this is our wish. Honest old acquaintance, Goodman Jobson! how dost thou?

Job. By my troth I am always sharp set towards punch, and am now come with a firm resolution, though but a poor cobbler, to be as richly drunk as a lord; I am a true English heart, and look upon drunkenness as the best part of the liberty of the subject.

But. Come, Jobson, we'll bring out our bowl of punch in solemn procession; and then for a song to crown our happiness.

[*They all go out, and return with a bowl of punch.*]

A I R II. Charles of Sweden.

*Come, jolly Bacchus, god of wine,
Crown this night with pleasure;
Let none at cares of life repine,
To destroy our pleasure:
Fill up the mighty sparkling bowl,
That ev'ry true and loyal soul
May drink and sing without controul,
To support our pleasure.
Thus, mighty Bacchus, shalt thou be
Guardian of our pleasure;
That under thy protection we
May enjoy new pleasure.
And as the hours glide away,
We'll in thy name invoke their stay,
And sing thy praises, that we may
Live and die with pleasure.*

But. The king and the royal family in a brim-mer.

A I R III.

*Here's a good health to the king,
And send him a prosperous reign;
O'er hills and high mountains,
We'll drink dry the fountains,
Until the sun rises again, brave boys,
Until the sun rises again.
Then here's to thee, my boy boon,
And here's to thee, my boy boon;
As we've tarry'd all day
For to drink down the sun,
So we'll tarry and drink down the moon, brave boys,
So we'll tarry and drink down the moon.*

[Omnes huzza!]

Enter Sir John, and Lady.

Lady. O heaven and earth! What here's within my doors? Is hell broke loose? What troops of fiends are here? Sirrah, you impudent rascal, speak!

Sir John. For shame, my dear—As this is a time of mirth and jollity, it has always been the custom of my house, to give my servants liberty in this season, and to treat my country neighbours; that with innocent sports they may divert themselves.

Lady. I say, meddle with your own affairs; I will govern my own house without your putting in an oar. Shall I ask leave to correct my own servants?

Sir John. I thought, Madam, this had been my house, and these my tenants and servants.

Lady. Did I bring a fortune, to be thus abus'd and snub'd before people? Do you call my authority in question, ungrateful man? Look you to your dogs and horses abroad, but it shall be my province to govern here; nor will I be controul'd by e'er a hunting, hawking knight in christendom.

A I R IV.

Sir John. *Ye gods! you gave to me a wife,
Out of your grace and favour,
To be the comfort of my life,
And I was glad to have her;
But if your providence divine
For greater bliss design her,
To obey your wills, at any time,
I'm ready to resign her.*

This it is to be married to a continual tempest; strife and noise, canting and hypocrisy, are eternally about—'Tis impossible to bear it long.

Lady. Ye filthy scoundrels, and odious jades, I'll teach you to junket thus, and steal my provisions; I shall be devour'd at this rate.

But. I thought, Madam, we might be merry once upon a holiday.

Lady. Holiday, you popish cur! is one day more holy than another? and if it be, you'll be sure to get drunk upon it, you rogue. [Beats him.] You

minx, you impudent flirt, are you jiggling it after an abominable fiddle? all dancing is whorish, hussy.

[Lugs her by the ears.]

Lucy. O lud! she has pull'd off both my ears.

Sir John. Pray, Madam, consider your sex and quality; I blush for your behaviour.

Lady. Consider your incapacity; you shall not instruct me. Who are you thus muffled, you buzzard?

[She beats 'em all, Jobson flees by.]

Job. I am an honest, plain, pialm-singing cobbler, Madam; if your ladyship would but go to church, you might hear me above all the rest there.

Lady. I'll try thy voice here first, villain.

[Strikes him.]

Job. Nounz! what a pox, what a devil ails you?

Lady. O profane wretch! wicked varlet!

Sir John. For shame! your behaviour is monstrous!

Lady. was ever poor lady so miserable in a brutish husband as I am! I that am so pious and so religious a woman!

Job. [Sings.] *He that has the best wife,*

She's the plague of his life,

But for her that will scold and will quarrel.

[Exit.]

Lady. O rogue, scoundrel, villain!

Sir John. Remember modesty.

Lady. I'll rout you all with a vengeance, I'll spoil your squeaking treble.

[Beats the fiddle about the blind man's head.]

Fid. O murder, murder! I am a dark man, which way shall I get hence? Oh heaven! she has broke my fiddle, and undone me, and my wife and children.

Sir John. Here, poor fellow, take your staff and be gone: There's money to buy you two such; that's your way.

[Exit Fiddler.]

Lady. Methinks you are very liberal, Sir; must my estate maintain you in your profuseness?

Sir John. Go up to your closet, pray, and compose your mind.

Lady. O wicked man! to bid me pray.

Sir John. A man can't be completely curst, I see, without marriage; but since there is such a thing as a separate maintenance, she shall to-morrow enjoy the benefit of it.

A I R V. Of all Comforts I miscarry'd.

Of the states in life so various,

Marriage, sure, is most precarious;

'Tis a maze so strangely winding,

Still we are new mazes finding;

'Tis an action so severe,

That nought but death can set us clear.

Happy's the man, from wedlock free,

Who knows to prize his liberty:

Were men wary

How they marry,

We should not be by half so full of misery.

[Knocking at the door.]

Here, where are my servants? Must they be frighted from me?—Within there—See who knocks.

Lady. Within there.—Where are my fluts? Ye drabs, ye queans—Lights there.

Enter Servants, sneaking, with Candles.

But, Sir, it is a doctor that lives ten miles off: he practises physic, and is an astrologer; your worship knows him very well, he is a cunning man, makes almanacks, and can help people to their goods again.

Enter Doctor.

Doct. Sir, I humbly beg your honour's pardon for this unseasonable intrusion; but I am benighted,

and 'tis so dark, that I can't possibly find my way home; and knowing your worship's hospitality, desire the favour to be harbour'd under your roof to-night.

Lady. Out of my house, you lewd conjuror, you magician.

Doct. Here's a turn!—Here's a change!—Well, if I have any art, ye shall smart for this. [Aside.]

Sir John. You see, friend, I am not master of my own house; therefore, to avoid any uneasiness, go down the lane about a quarter of a mile, and you'll see a cobbler's cottage; stay there a little, and I'll send my servant to conduct you to a tenant's house, where you'll be well entertain'd.

Doct. I thank you, Sir; I'm your most humble servant.—But as for your lady there, she shall this night feel my resentment. [Exit.]

Sir John. Come, Madam, you and I must have some conference together.

Lady. Yes, I will have a conference, and a reformation too, in this house, or I'll turn it upside down—I will.

A I R VI. Contented Country Farmer.

Sir John. Grant me, ye pow'rs, but this request,

And let who will the world contest;

Convey her to some distant shore,

Where I may ne'er behold her more;

Or let me to some cottage fly,

In freedom's arms to live and die.

[Exit.]

SCENE III. The Cobbler's.

Nell, and the Doctor.

Nell. Pray, Sir, mend your draught, if you please: you are very welcome, Sir.

Doct. Thank you heartily, good woman; and, to requite your civility, I'll tell you your fortune.

Nell. O, pray do, Sir; I never had my fortune told me in my life.

Doct. Let me behold the lines of your face.

Nell. I'm afraid, Sir, 'tis none of the cleanest; I have been about dirty work all this day.

Doct. Come, come, 'tis a good face, be not asham'd of it; you shall shew it in greater places suddenly.

Nell. O dear, Sir, I shall be mightily asham'd; I want 'dacity when I come before great folks.

Doct. you must be confident, and fear nothing; there is much happiness attends you.

Nell. Oh me! this is a rare man; heav'n be thank'd.

Doct. To-morrow, before sun-rise, you shall be the happiest woman in this county.

Nell. How, by to-morrow! Alack-a-day! Sir, how can that be?

Doct. No more shall you be troubled with a surly husband, that rails at and straps you.

Nell. Lud! how came he to know that? he must be a conjuror!—Indeed my husband is somewhat rugged, and in his cups will beat me, but it is not much; he's an honest pains-taking man; and I let him have his way. Pray, Sir, take t'other cup of ale.

Doct. I thank you.—Believe me, to-morrow you shall be the richest woman i' th' hundred, and ride in your own coach.

Nell. O father! you jeer me.

Doct. By my art! I do not. But mark my words, be confident, and bear all out, or worse will follow.

Nell. Never fear, Sir, I warrant you—O gemini!

A I R VII. Send Home my long-stray'd Ewes.

*My swelling heart now leaps for joy,
And riches all my thoughts employ;
No more shall people call me Nell,
Her ladyship will do as well;
Deck'd in my golden rich array,
I'll in my chariot roll away,
And shine at rings, at balls, and play.*

Enter Jobson.

Job. Where is this quean? Here, Nell! What a pox are you drunk with your lambs-wool?

Nell. O husband! here's the rarest man—he has told me my fortune.

Job. Has he so! and planted my fortune too, a lusty pair of horns upon my head—Eh!—Is it not so?

Doct. Thy wife is a virtuous woman, and thou'lt be happy.

Job. Come out, you hang-dog, you juggler, you cheating, bamboozling villain, must I be cuckolded by such a rogue as you are; mackmaticians, and almanack-makers!

Nell. Prythee peace, husband, we shall be rich, and have a coach of our own.

Job. A coach! a cart, a wheel-barrow, you jade. By the mackin, she's drunk, bloody drunk, most confoundedly drunk.—Get you to bed, you trumpet.

[Beats her.]

Nell. O mercy on us! Is this a taste of my good fortune?

Doct. You had better not have touch'd her, you surly rogue.

Job. Out of my house, you villain, or I'll run my awl up to the handle in your buttocks.

Doct. Farewel, you paltry slave.

Job. Get out, you rogue.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. Changes to an open Country.

Doctor solus.

A I R VIII. The Spirit's Song in Macbeth.

*My little spirits, now appear,
Nadier and Abisbogg, draw near.
The time is short, make no delay,
Then quickly baffle, and come away:
Ner moon, nor stars, afford their light,
But all is wrapt in gloomy night:
Both men and beasts to rest incline,
And all things favour my design.*

Spirits. [Within.] Say, master, what is to be done?

Doct. *My strict commands be sure attend,
For ere this night shall have an end,
You must this cobbler's wife transform,
And to the knight's the like perform:
With all your most specific charms,
Convey each wife to diff'rent arms;
Let the delusion be so strong,
That none may know the right from wrong.
All this we will with care perform,
In thunder, lightning, and a storm.*

[Thunder.]

SCENE changes to the Cobbler's House.

Jobson at work. The Bed in view.

Job. What devil has been abroad to-night? I never heard such claps of thunder in my life. I thought my little hovel would have flown away; but now all is clear again, and a fine star-light morning it is. I'll fettle myself to work. They say winter's thunder brings summer's wonder.

A I R IX. Charming Silly.

*Of all the trades from East to West,
The cobbler's past contending;
Is like, in time, to prove the best,
Which ev'ry day is mending.*

*How great his praise, who can amend
The soles of all his neighbours;
Nor is unmindful of his end,
But to his last still labours.*

Lady. Hey-day! what impudent ballad-singing rogue is that, who dares wake me out of my sleep? I'll have you flead, you rascal.

Job. What a pox, does she talk in her sleep? or is the drunk still?

[Sings.]

A I R X. Now ponder well, ye Parents dear.

I.

*In Bath a wanton wife did dwell,
As Chaucer he did write;
Who wantonly did spend her time,
In many a fond delight.
All on a time sore sick she was,
And she at length did die;
And then her soul at Paradise
Did knock most mightily.*

Lady. Why, villain, rascal, screech-owl, who makest a worse noise than a dog hung in the pales, or a hog in a high wind! Where are all my servants? Somebody come and hamstring this rogue.

[Knocks.]

Job. Why, how now, you brazen quean! You must get drunk with the conjuror, must you? I'll give you money another time to spend in lambs-wool, you faucy jade, shall I?

Lady. Monstrous! I can find no bell to ring. Where are my servants? They shall toss him in a blanket.

Job. Ay, the jade's asleep still; the conjuror told her she should keep her coach, and she is dreaming of her equipage.

[Sings.]

II.

*I will come in, in spiced she said,
Of all such churls as thee;
Thou art the cause of all our pain,
Our grief and misery.
Thou first broke the commandment,
In honour of thy wife:
When Adam heard her say these words,
He ran away for life.*

Lady. Why, husband! Sir John! will you suffer me to be thus insulted?

Job. Husband! Sir John! What a pox, has the knighted me? And my name's Zekel too; a good jest, faith!

Lady. Ha! he's gone, he is not in the bed. Heav'n! where am I? Foh! what loathsome smells are here! Canvas sheets, and a filthy ragged curtain; a beastly rug, and a flock-bed. Am I awake, or is it all a dream? What rogue is that? Sirrah! Where am I? Who brought me hither? What rascal are you?

Job. This is amazing, I never heard such words from her before. If I take my strap to you, I'll make you know your husband. I'll teach you better manners, you faucy drab.

Lady. Oh astonishing impudence! You my husband, sirrah? I'll have you hang'd, you rogue; I'm a lady. Let me know who has given me a sleeping-draught, and convey'd me hither, you dirty varlet.

Job. A sleeping-draught! yes, you drunken jade, you had a sleeping-draught with a pox to you. What, has not your lambs-wool done working yet?

Lady. Where am I? Where has my villainous husband put me? Lucy! Lettice! Where are my queans?

Job. Ha, ha, ha! what does she call her maids too? The conjuror has made her mad as well as drunk.

Lady. He talks of conjurors; sure I am bewitched. Ha! what clothes are here? a linsley-woolfey gown, a callico hood, a red baize petticoat! I am removed from my own house by witchcraft. What must I do? What will become of me?

[Horns wind without.]

Job. Hark! the hunters and the merry horns are abroad. Why, Nell, you lazy jade, 'tis break of day; to work, to work: come, and spin, you drab, or I'll tan your hide for you! What a pox, must I be at work two hours before you in a morning?

Lady. Why, sirrah, thou impudent villain; dost thou not know me, you rogue?

Job. Know you? yes, I know you well enough, and I'll make you know me before I have done with you.

Lady. I am Sir John Loverule's lady; how came I here?

Job. Sir John Loverule's lady! no, Nell, not quite so bad neither; that damn'd stingy, fanatick whore, plagues every one that comes near her; the whole country curses her.

Lady. Nay, then, I'll hold no longer; you rogue, you insolent villain, I'll teach you better manners.

[Flings the bedstaff and other things at him.]

Job. This is more than ever I saw by her; I never had an ill word from her before. Come, strap, I'll try your mettle; I'll sober you, I warrant you, quean. [He straps her, she flies at him.]

Lady. I'll pull your throat out; I'll tear out your eyes; I am a lady, sirrah. Oh murder! murder! Sir John Loverule will hang you for this. Murder! murder!

Job. Come, huffey, leave fooling, and come to your spinning, or else I'll lamb you, you ne'er was so lamb'd since you were an inch long. Take it up, you jade. [She flings it down, he straps her.]

Lady. Hold, hold, I'll do any thing.

Job. Oh! I thought I should bring you to yourself again.

Lady. What shall I do? I can't spin. [Aside.]

Job. I'll into my stall; 'tis broad day now.

[Works and sings.]

A I R XI. Come, let us prepare.

Let matters of state

Disquiet the great,

The cobler has nought to perplex him;

Has nought but his wife

To ruffle his life,

And her be can strap if she vex him;

He's out of the pow'r

Of Fortune, that whore,

Since low as can be she has thrust him:

From duns he's secure;

For being so poor,

There's none to be found that will trust him.

Heyday, I think the jade's brain is turn'd. What, have you forgot to spin, huffey?

Lady. But I have not forgot to run. I'll e'en try my feet; I shall find somebody in the town, sure, that will succour me. [She runs out.]

Job. What, does she run for it! I'll after her. [He runs out.]

SCENE changes to Sir John's House; Nell in Bed.

Nell. What pleasant dreams I have had to-night! methought I was in paradise, upon a bed of violets and roses, and the sweetest husband by my side! Ha! bless me, where am I now? What sweets are these? No garden in the spring can equal them:

Am I on a bed? The sheets are farfenet sure, no linen ever was so fine. What a gay, silken robe have I got! O heaven! I dream! Yet if this be a dream, I would not wish to wake again. Sure I died last night, and went to heaven, and this is it.

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. Now must I wake an alarm that will not lie still again till midnight, at soonest; the first greeting, I suppose, will be jade or whore, Madam! Madam!

Nell. O gemini! who's this? What dost say, sweetheart?

Lucy. Sweetheart! Oh lud, sweetheart! the best names I have had these three months from her, have been slut, or whore.—What gown and ruffles will your ladyship wear to-day?

Nell. What does she mean? Ladyship! Gown and ruffles! Sure I am awake: Oh! I remember the cunning-man now.

Lucy. Did your ladyship speak?

Nell. Ay, child, I'll wear the same I did yesterday.

Lucy. Mercy upon me!—Child!—Here's a miracle!

Enter Lettice:

Let. Is my lady awake? Have you had her shoe or her slipper flung at your head yet?

Lucy. Oh no, I'm overjoy'd; she's in the kindest humour! go to the bed and speak to her, now is your time,

Let. Now's my time! what to have another tooth beat out!—Madam!

Nell. What dost say, my dear?—O father! what would she have?

Let. What work would your ladyship please to have done to-day? Shall I work plain-work, or go to my stitching?

Nell. Work, child! 'tis holiday. No work to-day.

Let. Oh mercy! am I, or she awake? or do we both dream?—Here's a blest change!

Lucy. If it continues we shall be a happy family

Let. Your ladyship's chocolate is ready.

Nell. Mercy on me! what's that? some garment, I suppose. [Aside.]—Put it on then, sweetheart.

Let. Put it on, Madam! I have taken it off; 'tis ready to drink.

Nell. I mean, put it by; I don't care for drinking now.

Enter Cook.

Cook. Now go I like a bear to the stake, to know her scurvy ladyship's commands about dinner. How many rascally names must I be call'd?

Let. Oh, John Cook! you'll be out of your wits to find my lady in so sweet a temper.

Cook. What a devil, are they all mad?

Lucy. Madam, here's the cook come about dinner.

Nell. Oh! there's a fine cook! He looks like one of your gentlefolks. [Aside.]—Indeed, honest man, I'm very hungry now; pray get me a rasher upon the coals, a piece of one milk cheese, and some white bread.

Cook. Hey! what's to do here? my head turns round. Honest man! I look'd for rogue or rascal, at least. She's strangely changed in her diet, as well as her humour. [Aside.]—I'm afraid, Madam, cheese and bacon will sit very heavy on your ladyship's stomach, in a morning. If you please,

Madam, I'll toss you up a white fricassée of chickens in a trice, Madam; or what does your ladyship think of a veal sweetbread?

6 THE DEVIL TO PAY.

Nell. E'en what you will, good cook.

Cook. Good cook! good cook! Ah, 'tis a sweet lady!

Enter Butler.

Oh! kiss me, Chip, I am out of my wits: we have the kindest, sweetest lady.

But. You shamming rogue, I think you are out of your wits, all of ye; the maids look merrily too.

Lucy. Here's the butler, Madam, to know your ladyship's orders.

Nell. Oh! pray, Mr. Butler! let me have some small beer, when my breakfast comes in.

But. Mr. Butler! Mr. Butler! I shall be turn'd into stone with amazement. [*Aside.*]—Would not your ladyship rather have a glass of Frontinac, or Lacryme?

Nell. O dear! what hard names are there! but I must not betray myself. [*Aside.*]—Well, which you please, Mr. Butler.

Enter Coachman.

But. Go, get you in, and be rejoiced as I am.

Coach. The cook has been making his game I know not how long. What do you banter too?

Lucy. Madam, the coachman.

Coach. I come to know if your ladyship goes out to-day; and which you'll have, the coach or chariot?

Nell. Good lack-a-day! I'll ride in the coach if you please.

Coach. The sky will fall, that's certain. [*Exit.*

Nell. I can hardly think I am awake yet. How well pleased they all seem to wait upon me! O notable cunning-man! My head turns round; I am quite giddy with my own happiness.

A I R XII. What tho' I am a Country Lass.

Tho' late I was a cobler's wife,

In cottage most obscure-a;

In plain stuff-gown, and short-car'd coif,

Hard labour did endure-a:

The scene is chang'd, I'm alter'd quite,

And from poor humble Nell-a,

I'll learn to dance, to read, and write,

And from all bear the bell-a. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir John, meeting his Servants.

But. O, Sir! here's the rarest news!

Lucy. There never was the like, Sir; you'll be overjoy'd and amaz'd.

Sir John. What, are ye mad! What's the matter with ye? How now! here's a new face in my family; what's the meaning of all this?

But. Oh, Sir! the family's turn'd upside down. We are almost distracted; the happiest people!

Lucy. Ay, my lady, Sir, my lady.

Sir John. What, is the dead?

But. Dead! Heaven forbid! O, she's the best woman, the sweetest lady!

Sir John. This is astonishing! I must go and enquire into this wonder. If this be true, I shall rejoice indeed!

But. 'Tis true, Sir, upon my honour. Long live Sir John and my lady! huzza!

Enter Nell.

Nell. I well remember the cunning-man warn'd me to bear all out with confidence, or worse, he said, would follow. I am amaz'd, and know not what to do with all this ceremony: I am amaz'd, and out of my senses. I look'd in the glass, and saw a gay fine thing I knew not; n'thought my face was not at all like that I have seen at home in a piece of looking-glass, fastened upon the cupboard. But great ladies, they say, have flattering

glasses, that shew them far unlike themselves, whilst poor folks glasses represent them e'en just as they are.

A I R XIII. When I was a Dame of Honour.

Fine ladies, with an artful grace,

Disguise each native sea-ure;

Whilst scarr'ring glasses shew the face,

As made by art, not nature;

But we poor folks in home-spun grey,

By patch nor washes tainted,

Look fresh, and sweeter far, than they

That still are finely painted.

Lucy. O, Madam! here's my master just return'd from hunting.

Enter Sir John.

Nell. O gemini! This fine gentleman my husband!

Sir John. My dear, I am overjoy'd to see my family thus transported with extasy which you occasioned.

Nell. Sir, I shall always be proud to do every thing that may give you delight, or your family satisfaction.

Sir John. By heaven, I am charm'd! Dear creature, if thou continuest thus, I had rather enjoy thee than the Indies. But can this be real? may I believe my senses?

Nell. All that's good above can witness for me, I am in earnest. [*Kneels.*

Sir John. Rise, my dearest! Now am I happy, indeed!—Where are my friends, my servants? Call 'em all, and let them be witnesses of my happiness. [*Exit.*

Nell. O rare sweet man! he smells all over like a nosegay.—Heaven preserve my wits.

A I R XIV. 'Twas within a Furlong, &c.

Nell. O charming cunning-man! thou hast been wondrous kind,

And all thy golden words do now prove true, I find;

Ten thousand transports wait,

To crown my happy state!

Thus kiss'd, and press'd,

And doubly bless'd

In all this pomp and state,

Now scenes of joy arise,

Which fill me with surprise!

My rocks, and reel,

And spinning-wheel,

And husband I despise;

Then, Jason, now adieu,

Thy cobbling still pursue,

For hence I will not, cannot, ne, nor must not buckle to.

SCENE, Jobson's House.

Enter Lady.

Was ever lady yet so miserable! I can't make one soul in the village acknowledge me; they sure are all in the conspiracy. This wicked husband of mine has laid a devilish plot against me; I must at present submit, that I may hereafter have an opportunity of executing my design. Here comes the rogue: I'll have him strangled; but I must yield.

Enter Jobson.

Job. Come on, Nell, art thou come to thyself yet?

Lady. Yes, I thank you, I wonder what I all; this cunning man has put powder in my drink most certainly.

Job. Powder! the brewer put good store of powder of malt in it, that's all. Powder, quoth she! Ha, ha, ha!

Lady. I never was so all the days of my life.

Job. Was so; no, nor I hope ne'er will be o

again, to put me to the trouble of strapping you so awfully.

Lady. I'll have that right-hand cut off for that, *[Aside.]* You was unmerciful, to bruise me so.

Job. Well, I'm going to Sir John Loverule's; all his tenants are invited; there's to be rare feasting and revelling, and open house kept for three months.

Lady. Husband, shan't I go with you?

Job. What the devil ails thee now? did I not tell thee but yesterday, I would strap thee for desisting to go, and art thou at it again with a pox?

Lady. What does the villain mean by strapping, and yesterday?

Job. Why, I have been married but six weeks, and you long to make me a cuckold already. Stay at home and be hang'd; there's good cold pie in the cupboard, but I'll trust thee no more with strong beer, hussey. *[Exit.]*

Lady. Well, I'll not be long after you; sure I shall get some of my own family to know me, they can't be all in this wicked plot. *[Exit.]*

SCENE, Sir John's.

Sir John and Company enter.

AIR XV. Duetto.

Sir John. Was ever man possess'd of
So sweet, so kind a wife!
Nell. Dear Sir, you make me proud:
Be you but kind,
And you shall find
All the good I can boast of
Shall end but with my life.

Sir John. Give me thy lips;
Nell. First let me, dear Sir, wipe 'em;
Sir John. Was ever so sweet a wife! *[Kissing her.]*
Nell. Thank you, dear Sir!
I vow and protest,
I ne'er was so kiss;
Again, Sir!

Sir John. Again, and again, my dearest;
O may it last for life!
What joy thus to enfold thee!
Nell. What pleasure to behold thee,
Inclin'd again to kiss!
Sir John. How ravishing the bliss!
Nell. I little thought, this morning,
'Twould ever come to this. *[Da Capo.]*

Enter Lady.

Lady. Here's a fine rout and rioting! You, sirrah, butler, you rogue.

But. Why how now! Who are you?

Lady. Impudent varlet! don't you know your lady?

But. Lady! here, turn this mad woman out of doors.

Lady. You rascal, take that, sirrah.

[Flings a glass at him.]

Foot. Have a care, hussey, there's a good pump without, we shall cool your courage for you.

Lady. You, Lucy, have you forgot me too, you minx?

Lucy. Forgot you, woman! why I never remembered you, I never saw you before in my life.

Lady. Oh the wicked slut! I'll give you cause to remember me, I will, hussey.

[Pulls her headclothes off.]

Lucy. Murder! murder! help!

Sir John. How now! what uproar's this?

Lady. You, Lettice, you slut, won't you know me neither? *[Strikes her.]*

Let. Help, help!

Sir John. What's to do there?

But. Why, Sir, here's a mad-woman calls her-

self my lady, and is beating and cuffing us all round.

Sir John. *[To Lady.]* Thou my wife! poor creature, I pity thee, I never saw thee before.

Lady. Then it is in vain to expect redress from thee, thou wicked contriver of all my misery.

Nell. How am I amaz'd! can that be I, there in my cloaths, that have made all this disturbance? and yet I am here, to my thinking, in these fine cloaths. How can this be? I am so confounded and affrighted, that I begin to wish I was with Zekel Jobson again.

Lady. To whom shall I apply myself, or whither can I fly? Heav'n! what do I see? Is not that I, yonder, in my gown and petticoat I wore yesterday? how can it be? I cannot be in two places at once.

Sir John. Poor wretch! She's stark mad.

Lady. What, in the devil's name, was I here before I came? Let me look in the glass. Oh, heavens! I am astonish'd, I don't know myself! If this be I that the glass shews me, I never saw myself before.

Sir John. What incoherent madness is this!

Enter Jobson.

Lady. There, that's the devil in my likeness, who has robb'd me of my countenance.—Is he here too!

Job. Ay, hussey; and here's my strap, you quean.

Nell. O dear! I'm afraid my husband will beat me, that ain on t'other side the room there.

Job. I hope your honours will pardon her; she was drinking with a conjuror last night, and has been mad ever since, and calls herself my lady Loverule.

Sir John. Poor woman! take care of her: do not hurt her, she may be cured of this.

Job. Yes, and please your worship, you shall see me cure her presently. Hussey, do you see this?

Nell. O, pray, Zekel, don't beat me!

Sir John. What says my love? Does she infect thee with madness too?

Nell. I am not well; pray lead me in.

[Exeunt Nell and Maid.]

Job. I beseech your worship, don't take it ill of me, she shall never trouble you more.

Sir John. Take her home, and use her kindly.

Lady. What will become of me?

[Exeunt Jobson and Lady.]

Enter Footman.

Foot. Sir, the Doctor who call'd here last night, desires you will give him leave to speak a word or two with you, upon very earnest business.

Sir John. What can this mean? Bring him in.

Enter Doctor.

Doct. Lo! on my knees, Sir, I beg forgiveness for what I have done, and put my life into your hands.

Sir John. What mean you?

Doct. I have exercis'd my magic art upon your lady. I know you have too much honour to take away my life, since I might have still concealed it, had I pleas'd.

Sir John. You have now brought me to a glimpse of misery too great to bear. Is all my happiness, then, turn'd into a vision only?

Doct. Sir, I beg you, fear not; if any harm comes on it, I freely give you leave to hang me.

Sir John. Inform me what you have done.

Doct. I have transform'd your lady's face so that she seems the cobbler's wife, and have charmed her face into the likeness of my lady's; and last night,

when the storm arose, my spirits convey'd them to each other's bed.

Sir John. Oh, wretch! thou hast undone me; I am fallen from the height of all my hopes, and must still be curst with a tempestuous wife, a fury whom I never knew quiet since I had her.

Doct. If that be all, I can continue the charm for both their lives.

Sir John. Let the event be what it will, I'll hang you if you do not end the charm this instant.

Doct. I will this minute, Sir; and perhaps you'll find it the luckiest of your life; I can assure you, your lady will prove the better for it.

Sir John. Hold, there's one material circumstance I'd know.

Doct. Your pleasure, Sir?

Sir John. Perhaps the cobbler has—you understand me!

Doct. I do assure you, no; for ere she was convey'd to his bed, the cobbler was got up to work, and he has done nought but beat her ever since, and you are like to reap the fruits of his labour. He'll be with you in a minute; here he comes.

Enter Jobson.

Sir John. So, Jobson, where's your wife?

Job. And please your worship, she's here at the door! But indeed I thought I had lost her just now; for as she came into the hall, she fell into such a swoon, that I thought she would never come out on't again; but a tweak or two by the nose, and half a dozen straps, did the business at last. Here, where are you, housewife?

Enter Lady.

[*Butler holds up the candle, but lets it fall when he sees her.*]

Bur. O heaven and earth! is this my lady?

Job. What does he say? my wife chang'd to my lady!

Cook. Ay, I thought the other was too good for our lady.

Lady. [To *Sir John.*] Sir, you are the person I have most offended; and I here confess I have been the work of wives in every thing, but that I always kept myself chaste. If you can vouchsafe once more to take me to your bosom, the remainder of my days shall joyfully be spent in duty, and observance of your will.

Sir John. Rise, Madam, I do forgive you; and if you are sincere in what you say, you'll make me happier than all the enjoyments in the world without you could do.

Job. What a pox! am I to lose my wife thus?

Enter Lucy and Lettice.

Lucy. Oh, Sir! the strangest accident has happen'd, it has amaz'd us; my lady was in so great a swoon, we thought she had been dead.

Lett. And when she came to herself, she proved another woman.

Job. Ha, ha, ha! a bull, a bull.

Lucy. She is so chang'd, I knew her not; I never saw her face before: O lud! is this my lady?

Lett. We shall be maul'd again.

Lucy. I thought our happiness was too great to last.

Lady. Fear not, my servants. It shall hereafter be my endeavour to make you happy.

Sir John. Persevere in this resolution, and we shall be blest, indeed, for life.

Enter Nell.

Nell. My head turns round; I must go home. O, Zekel! are you there?

Job. O lud! is that fine lady my wife! I gad I'm afraid to come near her. What can be the meaning of this?

Sir John. This is a happy change, and I'll have it celebrated with all the joy I proclaim'd for my late short-liv'd vision.

Lady. To me 'tis the happiest day I ever knew.

Sir John. Here, Jobson, take thy fine wife.

Job. But one word, Sir—Did not you worship make a buck of me, under the rose?

Sir John. No, upon my honour, nor ever kiss'd her lips till I came from hunting: but since she has been a means of bringing about this happy change, I'll give thee five hundred pounds home with her, go buy a stock of leather.

Job. Brave boys! I'm a prince, the prince of cobblers. Come hither and kiss me, Nell; I'll never strap thee more.

Nell. Indeed, Zekel, I have been in such a dream, that I'm quite weary of it. [To *Jobson.*] Forsooth, Madam, will you please to take your cloaths, and let me have mine again?

[To *Lady Lovelace.*]

Job. Hold your tongue, you fool, they'll serve you to go church.

Lady. No, thou shalt keep them, and I'll preserve thine as reliques.

Job. And can your ladyship forgive my strapping your honour so very much?

Lady. Most freely. The joy of this blessed change sets all things right again.

Sir John. Let us forget every thing that is past, and think of nothing now but joy and pleasure.

A I R XVI. Hey Boys, up go we.

Lady. Let ev'ry face with smiles appear,
Be joy in ev'ry breast,
Since, from a life of pain and care,
We now are truly blest.

Sir John. May no remembrance of past time
Our present pleasures soil;

Be nought but mirth and joy our crime,
And sporting all our toil.

Job. I hope you'll give me leave to speak,
If I may be so bold;
There's nought but the devil, and this gin
Could ever tame a scold.

